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Office of the Professions

Frequently Asked Questions

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Researching a Licensed Professional

1. How can I find out if an individual is licensed?

You may verify a license through our [online license verification service](#). If you need to contact OP directly about the status of a license, e-mail our customer service representatives at op4info@nysed.gov, call 518-474-3817, fax 518-474-1449, or [contact](#) the specific State board for the profession.

2. How can I learn more about services offered by licensed professionals within a profession?

Please see the [list of licensed professions](#) for more information about the services offered by licensed professionals.

3. How can I find out if there have been any disciplinary actions against a licensee?

You may [search](#) our site by name or by month of action for summaries of Regents disciplinary actions taken since 1994. Complaints are accusations of professional misconduct; those that do not result in disciplinary action are confidential. Disciplinary records for physicians, physician assistants, and specialist assistants are available from the Department of Health's Office of Professional Medical Conduct at

<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/opmc/main.htm>

If an action has been taken against a licensee for professional misconduct, you may contact OP's Public Information Unit by e-mail at dplsdsu@nysed.gov or call 518-474-3817 ext. 330 for a copy of the official disciplinary record.

4. What does it mean when a professional is in "good standing"?


"Good standing" means that the licensee is permitted to practice. Licensees who have been the subject of disciplinary action are considered to be in "good standing" unless they have had their license revoked or suspended.

5. Can I find out if a licensee has been sued for malpractice?

Malpractice suits are different from complaints about professional misconduct. Malpractice is handled by the insurance and court systems; for information about malpractice actions, you may wish to contact your County Clerk's office or local court system.


Filing a Complaint

1. How do I file a complaint?

You will need to complete a [complaint form](#) ( 29 KB). Send your completed complaint form directly to the [regional office](#) nearest you or fax it to our main professional discipline office at 212-951-6537.

If you would like to speak with someone first about professional misconduct or unlicensed practice, you may call our complaint hotline at 1-800-442-8106, contact our nearest [regional office](#), or e-mail conduct@nysed.gov for more information.

2. If I want to file a complaint, do I have to be sure the professional is guilty?

No. If you think you may have been the victim of professional misconduct, file a [complaint form](#) ( 29 KB). The Office of the Professions will look into the complaint and determine if misconduct has occurred.

3. Can you order a licensed professional to give me my money back?

OP does not have the authority to get involved in fee disputes; except for programs such as Worker's Compensation and Medicaid, where fees are set by law, licensees can charge whatever they believe appropriate. We can assist you, however, if you believe that you were charged for work that was not done or which was done poorly.

Following Up on a Complaint

1. What happens after I file a complaint?

Staff in the appropriate [regional office](#) follow up on each complaint. Members of the State Board for the profession may be consulted during the investigation. If substantial evidence of misconduct is found, we will pursue disciplinary action. Cases of illegal (unlicensed) practice may be handled administratively, or they may be referred after investigation to the State Attorney General for criminal prosecution.

2. Can I get information about a complaint when it is under investigation?

You may contact the investigator assigned to your complaint at any time during the investigation to learn about the status of your complaint. You will also be informed if the complaint has been referred for further action.

3. How long does an investigation take? When will I hear about the outcome?

Almost all investigations are completed within 9 months or less. The time needed to prosecute cases varies, although many cases are concluded through negotiated settlements. Complicated cases may take 2 years or more (from initial complaint to final action) to resolve. If you file a professional misconduct complaint, you will be informed of the status of your complaint and the final outcome.

Disciplinary Actions

1. What happens when a licensed professional is the subject of disciplinary action?

Minor forms of misconduct may be handled through advisory letters or administrative warnings issued by the Office of the Professions; these administrative actions are confidential. The penalties for more serious misconduct range from a fine to the revocation of the license to practice, in accordance with the nature of the misconduct and its consequences. The Board of Regents, which oversees the State Education Department and its Office of the Professions, reviews and takes final action on the most serious professional discipline cases.

If the disciplined professional's license to practice has not been revoked or suspended, the Office of the Professions may monitor the professional to ensure that probationary terms--such as periodic employer reports or retraining courses--are met.

2. If a license is revoked or suspended, is it permanent?

With limited exceptions, individuals who have surrendered their licenses or had their licenses revoked must wait at least three years to apply for license restoration. While the Board of Regents has the authority to restore a professional license, such restoration is not a right. The former licensee must prove that he or she is worthy of the privilege of having a professional license.